achievements of the goal of removing poverty set by the Finance Ministers' Meeting; and

(c) what is Government's perception about the utility of SAARC forum for discussion on matters of mutual trust and economic issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) The SAARC Finance/Planning Ministers met in Dhaka on 10-11 July, 1994, primarily to discuss issues relating to poverty alleviation/eradication and also review the trends in the global economic situation, the economic situation in the South Asian countries and the impact on the region of the emergence of regional trading blocks around the world. During these meetings of the SAARC Finance/Planning Ministers, there were no discussions on issue relating to mutual mistrust and varying security perceptions.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government of India is fully committed to regional cooperation and utilising the SAARC Forum for cooperation in the core economic areas, so as to improve mutual respect and trust.

Hostile Labour MEP's Bode ill for India

1134. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been invited to the newsitem captioned "Hostile Labour MEP's bode ill for India" appearing in the 'The Observer of Business and Politics' New Delhi, dated, 13th July, 1994;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what precautionary and timely steps are being taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government are aware of constiutency pressures which may influence the public positions of some members of the newly elected European Parliament on issues of concern to India. Our High Commission in London and other Missions in countries of the European Union are in regular contact with these MEPs to apprise them of the facts related to J&K and problems posed by externally sponsored terrorism, and to encourage them to take an objective stand.

Asian security forum

1135. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is actively seeking membership of the new Asian security forum being launched by the ASEAN block and other South-east Asian countries along with their Western allies;

(b) if so, the stage at which the matter stands at present; and

(c) how far joining this new regional security forum will be useful to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) India has recently indicated to the ASEAN member-countries its interest in joining the ASEAN Regional Forum.

(b) The general issue relating to admission of new members to the Forum is yet to be considered.

(c) Joining the ARF will enable India to participate in discussions on political and security issues of the region that are of mutual concern.

Recovery of Loan from SAARC member countries

1136. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any efforts for the recovery of loans provided to the SAARC Member-countries;